REPORT

ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

MESMERIC INFIRMARY,

HELD AT

The Institution,

No. 9, BEDFORD STREET, BEDFORD SQUARE,

On WEDNESDAY, the 7th of MAY, 1851.



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MESMERIC INFIRMARY.

THE annual meeting of the friends and subscribers of this institution was held on Wednesday, May 7, at the Infirmary, No. 9, Bedford Street, Bedford Square— 1851

The Rev. GEORGE SANDBY, in the chair.

The CHAIRMAN opened the proceedings by expressing his regret at the unavoidable absence of their president, the Earl of Ducie, and a number of their noble and influential supporters. At the same time, he could not but congratulate them on the progress their institution had made during the past year. They would see by the report that there had been a great variety of cases treated most successfully. He had been in the habit of frequently attending the hospital, and had invariably found the committee sedulously attentive to their duties, and the mesmerisers performing their various offices in the most efficient manner. He was happy to say that their funds were also improving and several donations had been sent to them. Amongst these donations, he was proud to tell them, was one from the Archbishop of Dublin, who invariably followed out the truth faithfully and fearlessly in all matters, and also one from Earl Stanhope. Besides these, many other zealous and kind friends had rallied round them, and he thought they were justified in saying they were steadily and progressively forming an important nucleus amongst themselves, the effect of which would be felt through the kingdom. But, whilst he expressed his pleasure at finding so many had joined them, he could not refrain from avowing his regret that there were several distinguished persons who had benefited from their system whose names were still wanting. (Hear, hear.) He could not, however, help thinking that their absence was rather a proof of the strength of their institution than of its weakness, although that might appear paradoxical. For when they first commenced operations they were confined to a small body: but they rallied round each other, confident in their hopes of success. Time passed on, and this, like all other great and important truths, could now afford to have subdivi-

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sions amongst its disciples. They must all be aware that there were differences of opinion amongst the adherents of mesmerism on several points—some leaning to spiritual, some to material,* and some to physiological views; but, however,

* That Mr. Sandby may not be misconceived, we insert our following passage from No. XXI., p. 112 :- " Materialism. - So uninformed are most persons, that we every day hear men spoken of with horror as materialists. Now a man may be not only most conscientious, but most devout; nay, be a sincere and fervent Christian, aye, and a trinitarian Christian too ; and most evangelical,-and yet be a materialist. That is, a man who believes that the matter of his organized and living brain is endowed with such properties that it wills, feels, and thinks, and that these by nature decay and cease for ever with the brain at its decay, death and disintegration, may also believe that, by the will of God, by an additional and miraculous grant, they will exist again with a brain reproduced but, however glorified, still matter; according to the Fourth Article of the Church of England, which asserts that Christ, the first fruits of them that slept, sits at the right hand of the Father, with 'his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature.' We urge this, because we know that many excellent persons who take such a view of a future state are vilified and called atheists, infidels, sceptics, and cruelly injured, from the total ignorance of the majority of people, even of the higher ranks, that, though the term materialist is sometimes used to signify an atheist, it has another and most innocent signification, relating, not to supernatural things, but to an innocent opinion on a natural thing. Yes; a man may be a true Christian, of any protestant denomination, though not of the Roman Catholic persuasion, and yet be a materialist. We beg those who have not reflected much on this subject, but think, as parrots talk, by imitation, to read Bishop Law's Theory of Religion, Bishop Sherlock's Discourses, Bishop Watson's Anecdotes of his own Life, and Archbishop Tillotson."

Locke says, "All the difficulties that are raised against the thinking of matter, from our ignorance or narrow conceptions, stand not at all in the way of the power of GoD, if he pleases to ordain it so." The faculties of brutes prove, "either that God can and doth give to some parcels of matter a power of perception and thinking, or that all animals have immaterial and consequently immortal souls as well as men; and to say that fleas and mites, &c., have immortal souls as well as men, will possibly be looked on as going a great way to serve an hypothesis."—Second Reply to the Bishop of Worcester, p. 466., 8vo. edition.

Dr. Law, Bishop of Carlisle, in his Theory of Religion, &c., which went through seven editions, asserts that the sentence of death passed upon Adam and Eve meant nothing less than a total destruction of existence; and that the idea of its implying a continuation of consciousness and real existence in some other place than earth, is not sanctioned by Scripture, but is the philosophy of afterages.—p. 345. He adds, that Archbishop Tillotson, though a patron of this notion, confesses it is not found in the Bible: and, after a critical and elaborate examination of the words used in Scripture to denote soul and spirit, and their various applications, he sums up the enquiry thus:—" But neither do these words, nor any other, so far as I can find, ever stand for a purely immaterial principle in man, or a substance, whatever some imagine they mean by that word, wholly separable from, and independent of, the body."

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Bishop Sherlock employs strong expressions :—" Scholars may reason on the nature of the soul, and the condition of it when separated from the body : but the common hopes of nature receive no support from such enquiries. We die and moulder to dust; and in that state, what we are, or where we are, nature cannot say." Discourses ii., p. 85, and vol. iv., p. 79.

"In the ordinary derivation of plants and animals," says Paley, "from one another, a *particle*, in many cases minuter than all assignable, all conceivable dimensions; an aura, an effluvium, an infinitesimal; determines the organization of a future body: does no less than fix, whether that which is about to be pro-

divergent their opinions might be on some points, he trusted they would all join heart and hand in the promulgation of the truth of the one great cause they had in view. Their object was to relieve and alleviate suffering humanity in every shape and form. (Cheers.) Therefore, in a great cause like that, it behoved every sect, every creed, to unite and give a helping hand, both by their persons and their purses. (Hear, hear.) He believed the time was not far distant when the medical profession would also be converts to their system, and rally round them in their works of charity and love, and when the sons would blush to think that their fathers had been the foes of mesmerism—(cheers)—and when the hospitals would be anxious to have their assistance and support. There was one part of the report to which he felt particularly anxious to direct their attention. A proposition had been made that the committee should have the power of adding ladies to their number. This might seem rather a novel proceeding, but he hoped that it would be received favourably, for there were many reasons of a peculiar nature, which it was unnecessary for him to mention, why such a suggestion was exceedingly advisable. The presence of ladies would, in a great measure, silence all the suspicions of low and vulgar minds, who, conscious of their own iniquity, judged others by themselves. (Cheers.) To the ladies they were already greatly indebted, for, through their instrumentality, mesmerism had been introduced into families with the greatest success. In supporting this institution, they all had two grand objects in view, the extension of a great truth, and the alleviation of much human suffering and the cure of grievous complaints. The rev. gentleman concluded by calling upon Dr. Elliotson, the treasurer, to read the report.

duced shall be a vegetable, a merely sentient, or a RATIONAL being; an oak, a frog, or a *philosopher*; makes all these differences; gives to the future body its qualities, and nature, and species. And this *particle*, from which *springs*, and by which is determined, a whole future nature, itself *proceeds* from, and owes its

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constitution to, a prior body," &c.-Natural Theology, conclusion, p. 591.

Bishop Watson says, "when I went to the University, I was of opinion, as most schoolboys are, that the soul was a substance distinct from the body, and that when a man died, he, in classical phrase, breathed out his soul, animam expiravit; that it then went I knew not whither, as it had come into the body, from I knew not where nor when, and had dwelt in the body during life, but in what part of the body it had dwelt I knew not." "This notion of the soul was, without doubt, the offspring of prejudice and ignorance."—" Believing as I do in the truth of the Christian religion, which teaches that men are accountable for their actions, I trouble not myself with dark disquisitions concerning necessity and liberty, matter and spirit; hoping as I do for eternal life through Jesus Christ, I am not disturbed at my inability clearly to convince myself that the soul is or is not a substance distinct from the body."—Anecdotes of the Life of Bishop Watson, p. 14. sqq.

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The following Report was then read :--

"It was at the house of the Earl of Ducie, on the 9th of January, 1846, that the London Mesmeric Infirmary was founded: and, on the 25th of March, 1850, the committee sent a notice to every donor and subscriber that this house was open for the mesmerisation of patients. At first the committee did not feel justified in engaging more than one mesmeriser, the secretary himself promising to mesmerise at least two patients daily. But, on the 10th of June, they en-These two persons were William Fisher and gaged a second. Charles Mayhew, both recommended by Mr. Tubbs, surgeon, of Upwell, Cambridgeshire, and previously employed by him to his satisfaction as mesmerisers. During the last month, a third, a married woman, recommended by Dr. Ashburner, was engaged : and all three perform their duties satisfactorily,-with regularity, diligence, care, kindness, and propriety.

"The committee are most happy to inform the donors and subscribers that, since the 17th of November, they have had the services of Mr. Capern as secretary; the former secretary having resigned. Of Mr. Capern's mesmeric strength to assuage suffering and cure disease, of his devotion to the healing powers of mesmerism, of his indefatigableness, his disinterestedness and benevolence, they need not speak. He has fulfilled all the expectations which were formed of him from his previous history. He is present in the public rooms of the Institution from 10 till 4 o'clock, mesmerises many patients himself, and superintends the processes of the three mesmerisers, who attend daily, except Sunday, from 10 till 4 o'clock, and are allowed each, but not all at the same time, an hour in the middle of the day for dinner.

"The committee meet every Wednesday at two o'clock, and a complete account of the work of every day is read to them :—the history of each patient during the preceding week is detailed : his or her attendance, the length of time that he or she was mesmerised, the name of the mesmeriser, the mode of mesmerising and the effects, together with the remedial results which were observed at the end of the week. Fresh applicants are seen by the committee and examined by its medical members, and those persons who cease to be patients present and report themselves. "Ninety-one patients have been mesmerised,—54 males and 37 females : 29 are at present on the books,—19 males and 10 females. The greater part of the diseases have been palsy, neuralgia, rheumatism, epilepsy, St. Vitus's dance, and intense nervousness : and nearly all the cases had been of

long duration before they came under our care, and had resisted various and frequently severe modes of treatment under numerous well-informed medical gentlemen. Their chronic character rendered it impossible for mesmerism to produce many rapid cures. This circumstance, and the engagements and difficulties of the poor, together with the frequency of impatience, fickleness, and childishness common among human beings of all ranks, caused many to give up our services before a fair trial was made: and, indeed, some after a few visits. With the majority of those who received no benefit, or no permanent benefit, this was the fact : and they amount to 28. Twenty-four left before their cure was complete, but were more or less benefitted, and many very much benefitted, so that they were able and desirous to return to their employments.

"Some very striking cases have occurred. We may mention one of epilepsy in a child who was brought above a year ago. Not only has there been no fit for above six months, though previously the attacks were frequent and severe, but the child's appearance and general health have undergone a remarkable improvement—a circumstance which mesmerisers are in the habit of witnessing, whatever may be the disease.

"There is an equally satisfactory cure of epilepsy in another child.

"A child, with a leg shortened through disease of the hip, was received at the end of November: and on the 14th of April the father, who had previously procured the best treatment for his boy in vain, declared that the amelioration had exceeded all his expectations, and the improvement in the general health was remarkable. The child is still under treatment, and may be seen.

"On the 9th of last April, a man applied with an almost total inability to open his mouth, and an inability to swallow anything but fluids; and those he swallowed with extreme difficulty, so that he feared being starved. He had received public and private medical attendance for several weeks, and been informed that his complaint was palsy of the mouth and throat; and so indeed it was, but from cold, not from internal disease. One local mesmerisation by Mr. Capern enabled him in ten minutes to swallow his saliva, and on returning home he ate a rasher of bacon: and by repetitions of the treatment he has been enabled to eat all solids at his meals and to return to his work.

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"A man, 75 years of age, who laboured under palsy of one side of his system and had received no benefit before,

can now walk many miles a day. He is still under treatment and may be seen. The very first day he felt the mesmeric influence like a hot steam.

"A very remarkable case is that of a dumb boy, 14 years of age, who had been palsied from his birth and totally unable to walk. He had been in many hospitals and under many private medical gentlemen: and been refused admission into St. Bartholomew's Hospital from the conviction of the medical officer that his case was hopeless. He was first mesmerised on the 2nd of February, and an improvement was discernible after the first mesmerisation. After the sixth he could positively walk across the room without assistance, and, on the 27th of March, he walked from the Infirmary into Tottenham Court Road. He is still under treatment and may be seen. His father was lately absent from town, and on his return was astonished at the improvement.

"A dreadful case of despondency, with pains and noises in the head, giddiness, and dimness of sight, in a man 56 years of age, is yielding in a remarkable manner. Various medical gentlemen did their best, but in vain; and month after month life became a greater burden to him. He was admitted here in April, and now makes the following statement :— 'All my accumulated afflictions have been gradually subsiding; indeed, some of them, the giddiness and noises in the head, together with the great nervous oppression and dismal gloomy forebodings, have already left me, never, I hopefully trust, to return. My hearing and my eyesight are progressing favourably, the latter most especially, as I can now read better without glasses than I could see to read with them previously to being mesmerised.' This patient is still under treatment, and may be seen.

"We must not pass over the case of Catherine Brown, 7, King's Head-yard, Tooley-street, 57 years of age. When seven years old she fell down in a fit, and was unconscious for twenty-four hours. She had a similar attack monthly till she became a patient here, last February; and, for seven or eight days after the fit, she was invariably so weak as to be unable to attend to her avocations, and indeed was at no time able to attend to them properly. She suffered agonizing pains. She was treated by numerous medical gentlemen in Her London and in Ireland, without the least benefit. agonies frequently made her contemplate self-murder. She was three times in Guy's Hospital and twice in St. Thomas's, the last time for four months. She applied to a dispensary also, and the surgeon told her she had tic douloureux; and, in attempting to extract several of her teeth, broke some of

them. From the first attack, above 44 years ago, she was never free from pain, and took large quantities of laudanum when under medical treatment. She saw Mr. Capern early in February, and he mesmerised her head with contact for a quarter of an hour. The pain instantly and entirely ceased ; and from that moment she has not experienced the slightest pain, nor has she had a fit. On leaving the infirmary that day she called upon her niece at Islington, and, feeling a great desire to sleep, sat down in a chair and fell into a sleep so profound that her relatives were alarmed, and supposed that her doctor had given her too large a dose of laudanum. She woke spontaneously in four hours, greatly refreshed, and has remained well to this very time.

"We trust that the public will soon be satisfied of mesmerism being beneficial not only in such diseases as those hitherto treated here, but in every other: curing by itself in some instances, and in others powerfully aiding the medical and surgical measures of established utility that may be proper, nay indispensable.

"Many cases cannot be treated mesmerically unless the patients reside in the mesmeric institution; and, as long as the general hospitals refuse the benefit of mesmerism to their inmates, the poor must suffer grievously from our pecuniary inability to meet the difficulty. But we feel a strong conviction that the day is not far distant when the public sympathy will enable us by increased funds to receive in-patients.

"Donors have presented to the Infirmary $\pounds 899:8:0$. We have 118 annual subscribers, who, with one lately deceased, have contributed from the commencement $\pounds 352:10:0$, and the 118 contribute annually $\pounds 197:19:0$. We receive about $\pounds 12$ as the interest of five exchequer bills. We have $\pounds 884:4:3\frac{1}{2}$ in hand.

"Our chief expenses are for rent, rates, and taxes, nearly $\pounds 100:0:0;$ and for salaries $\pounds 218:0:0.$ Various other matters have cost about $\pounds 20:0:0$ during the last 12 months.

"We trust that some leasehold property promised us by Mr. Beaume will produce us about £50 per annum; and Mr. Capern has generously declared that as soon as we grant leases he will present us with 20 guineas.

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"The world is becoming every day better informed as to the reality, the curative and assuaging power, and the innocence of mesmerism : and the English medical profession is now emancipating itself from the unfortunate feelings which overpowered it from the time, now above 12 years ago, when the college and hospital, their council and medical professors, within a few yards on one side of the spot where we are now

assembled, scouted mesmerism with contumely, not enquiring for a moment whether it was useful or true, and forbade its presence within their walls: and when Mr. Wakley, within a few yards on the other side of the spot where we are now assembled, loudly declared to mankind that mesmerism was an entire fraud, and that all those who promoted it were cheats and impostors unworthy to be associated with by respectable medical men. We, therefore, trust that our donors and subscribers will steadily encrease, and our means prove sufficient for the holy cause in which we are engaged. The support hitherto given to us has been all but unsolicited. We have not had a sermon, a public dinner, a ball or a bazaar: nor do I know of more than one donor and one subscriber brought to us by solicitation. The matter has been one of extreme delicacy up to this time. But, as the truth and importance of mesmerism are now so extensively acknowledged, no one need longer to hesitate in advocating the cause of mesmeric charity before all men, in season and out of season. Persons apply every week for admission into the Infirmary for whom we have no room :---so much has the fame of mesmeric remedial power spread, and so quickly is that gross ignorance vanishing which connected the simple and natural process of mesmerising with Satan.

"We have received $\pounds 141:0:0$ in donations since the former general meeting: and had an increase of 32 annual subscribers, whose payments will amount to $\pounds 65:19:0$ annually. May the ensuing twelvemonth prove still more prosperous. The committee are anxious to propose to the meeting what they believe will be a great improvement. A lady, the wife of a distinguished mathematician and philosopher, proposed to Dr. Elliotson that ladies should be upon the committee, and offered to join if other ladies would do the same. He at once highly approved of the plan, and mentioned it to the committee, who equally approve of it. Such a measure must be advantageous in many respects, as,

in addition to our having female patients, we now employ a female mesmeriser.

"Mr. Holme, of Highgate, has kindly placed the whole of his phrenological collection in the hands of the institution, to be returned whenever we think fit, or his son, now very young may, after coming of age, may desire to have it. The strong alliance between mesmerism and phrenology caused the committee to regard the offer of a fine phrenological collection as too valuable to be slighted; and they have Mr. Holme to give occasional gratuitous discourses upon it after the mesmeric business of the day is over."

Mr. HOLLINGS, in moving the adoption of the report, could not refrain from adding his own expressions of deep and unfeigned satisfaction to those already pronounced by the Chairman, at the present condition of mesmerism in its character of a curative agent, as testified not only by the meeting, but by the growing convictions of the great body of the public at large. Fifteen years have now elapsed since experiments were first made upon an extensive scale, and under the direction of distinguished medical authority, in this country, for the purpose of testing the reality of the phenomena of animal magnetism, and the applicability of what is called the mesmeric state to the alleviation of various forms of suffering and disease. Of the spirit in which the results of such experiments were extensively, and perhaps not unnaturally, received, few among those who were present need be reminded. Nor would he (Mr. Hollings) attempt to infuse a single element of bitterness into the deliberations of the assembly, by adverting, in any but the most casual manner, to the unjust, the uncandid, and the most unphilosophical temper by which an opposition almost universal was at that time characterized. If this opposition, however disreputable, however unjustifiable in its manner, was the result of sincere and honest conviction, it is to a certain extent to be respected. If it arose from unreflecting and unenquiring prejudice, it is to be lamented. If it was prompted in any single instance by personal enmity, by professional rivalry, or by jealous self-interest, it is to be forgiven. Fifteen years however have elapsed-fifteen years of open and unremitting controversyduring which, whatever other means of refutation may have been neglected, the motives, the objects, the judgment, and even the characters of the friends of mesmerism, will generally be acknowledged to have been in no single instance either respected or spared. But, after all the employment of counter-arguments upon this subject, or of a method of antagonism to which men are but too apt to have recourse where argument itself is wanting, what is the result? At the present moment there is scarcely an intelligent mind in Great Britain, which does not acknowledge that there is reality in at least what we may call the normal characteristics of the mesmeric sleep; in other words, that its ordinary and easily induced phenomena of coma, of cataleptic rigidity, of insensibility more or less complete to impressions from without, are true effects of a specific and independent, however mysterious, cause; although such conditions were formerly, almost without distinction, regarded either as mere hallucinations in the mind of the operator, or, so far as the patient

was concerned, as instances of audacious and palpable fraud. In many quarters institutions are arising with the express view to the application of these conditions to medical purposes, and everywhere with the promise of extensive support. The names of men widely eminent in science and in literature, of the highest professional standing, of well-known authority in the church, in the senate, in the state, are being daily added to the already numerous list of the defenders and sustainers of this once contemned and vilified cause. We look to the neighbouring continent, and we find that the researches of one of the most original and philosophic minds of the age -he (Mr. Hollings) alluded to the recent experiments of the Baron Von Reichenbach-have succeeded in tracing, through the means of mesmerism, the existence, and in some measure the laws, of an entirely new material agency, upon the importance or the ultimate applications of which no man at the present time can venture to pronounce. Or we turn to that vast theatre of wealth, of promise, and of teeming humanity, presented by our Eastern dependencies; and what do we there behold? That which no one, who is not wholly insensible to the interests of his fellow beings, can regard without emotion, without gratitude, without delight. We see a flourishing and already celebrated public hospital, founded under the direct auspices of the British Government, and directed by medical skill and experience second to none in Europe, in which the power of the mesmeric state both as curative and anæsthetic is a matter of daily, nay, of almost hourly demonstration. We are told of the most agonizing and protracted operations,-the removal, for instance, of tumors, in some cases actually equalling in weight the bodies of the patients themselves,-repeatedly performed during a condition of absolute unconsciousness : and when the use of any other known method for the purpose of inducing insensibility would be but the substitution for physical endurance of almost certain death. We hear from the same quarter of the successful treatment, by similar means, of paralysis, of epilepsy, and of mania, as events of constant recurrence. And these truths are being openly taught by eminent professors, and under the sanction of the Council of Education of India, in the great medical school of Calcutta, to crowds of students, gathered from all climes and quarters of the gorgeous East. Yet a little while, and every district of that ancient cradle of art and civilization, to which both are now returning with more benignant promise, and in the strength of a maturer lifefrom the stony crest of the Himalayahs to the forests of Ava-shall rejoice in these trophies of curative or of palliative

skill; trophies than which, with the exception of the still greater blessings of equal legislation and of the pure religion of charity and love, none more glorious have been reared within those often disputed confines, from the time at which the phalanxes of Alexander turned back from the waters of the Indus, to the day when the banks of that famous river were crowded by those victorious warriors of the stormy North, whose banners were emblazoned with the reminiscences of fields contested in a distant hemisphere against ensigns more dreaded than those of the Macedonian, and whose arms were nerved to conquest by the recollections of Arcot, of Plassy, and of Assaye. Now if such have been the effects of but fifteen years of experiment, what, it may be reasonably asked, may not be expected from an equal space of years yet to come? For the progress of every great discovery is, as all are aware, in anything but the constant ratio of its initial force. Long and arduous and painful are its first advances towards even partial recognition and acceptance; but this barrier once surmounted, there is no scale or series known to the mathematician which can measure the strength of its expansiveness, or the rapidity of its diffusion. Let us not however be misunderstood. In the conduct of this Institution we do not proceed, we have not hitherto proceeded, upon the supposition, that in mesmerism is contained an absolute and infallible specific for all shapes and conditions of disease. There may be temperaments over which it will be found to have but a limited influence. There may be, there probably are, some forms of malady, which it will prove incompetent materially to affect. How far, under what circumstances, with what limitations and restrictions it is best applicable, must be learned, as everything else in therapeutics has hitherto been learned, from the teaching of experiment alone. We do not even attempt to pronounce upon the nature of the cause to which this most remarkable state is owing. Nor do we deem it our province to investigate those higher and mysterious phenomena of magnetic somnambulism, which afford so extensive and so deeply interesting a field for the labours of the psychologist. We are not claiming for mesmerism any higher place than that of a most powerful and most valuable subsidiary to the known resources of the medical art; far less do we wish to see it separated from the judgment and superintendence of those whose professional studies may be presumed best to qualify them to determine upon the expediency of its employment. What however we do affirm-not a few among us upon the testimony of our own senses again and again repeated; many upon the strength of evidence which

appears wholly incontrovertible-is this, that for the most acute and depressing suffering the agency which we are advocating has often proved the only available palliative : that under the most trying conditions of terror and anguish to which human fortitude can be submitted, it has been found a refuge as safe as it is welcome and effective : and that directed against not a few of that most melancholy class of disorders, upon which the utmost skill of the physician is vainly exhausted, it has issued in an unquestionable and permanent cure. How multitudinous and how various are the latter sources of human misery, can be known to that Being alone, by whom, doubtless for wise although inscrutable purposes, they are permitted to exist. Such conditions of evil are not indeed of a character to attract either public or general They do not meet us in the midst of our crowded notice. streets and thoroughfares : they do not come forth to court attention beneath the open blaze of day. But if, amidst the splendour and the tumult, the flow of busy life, the rush of joyous and exuberant existence, which the external aspect of this vast metropolis at the present moment exhibits, the curtain which conceals its darker features from our observation were suddenly withdrawn; if, like the common father of mankind, in the gloomy but immortal description of Milton, we could behold but a portion of those cases of physical debility and protracted torture, over which medical science,saying nothing against its undoubted triumphs-nothing against its manifold and improving appliances - nothing against the noble and disinterested spirit by which multitudes of its professors are actuated, -but over which this great science mourns hopelessly and in vain; who is there among us who would not stand aghast at the spectacle thus afforded?

> "Sight so deform, what heart of stone could long Tearless behold ?"

Who would not welcome, who would not readily avail himself

of any means, however vague, however novel, however empirical, which held out even the most distant promise of the relief of ills so terrible and extensive? He (Mr. Hollings) could distinctly and deliberately assert that he had seen such cases; their undeniable severity—their as undeniable relief. He had seen the most acute neuralgic anguish—not of days, but of months' continuance, and for which all that practised skill could suggest had been suggested to little purpose—allayed in a few minutes and almost as if by magic, by the simplest mesmeric treatment. He had seen disease, pronounced by competent medical authority to be organic, and by inference incurable, and for which the dissolution of the patient

seemed to offer the only probable means of release, succeeded, after the same mode of treatment had been for not very many days adopted, by a condition of active and vigorous health. But these are not insulated cases. The experience of the Chairman, and the experience of many who were present, could appeal to others quite as remarkable. They are paralleled, they are even far exceeded, by the records of this or of kindred institutions, and by hundreds of similar instances, established on the authority of the most unexceptionable witnesses both at home and abroad. Surely then we have at least a fair case for a candid and impartial hearing; a case which may challenge the most patient enquiry and justify the fullest and the most extensive experiment. Surely we are well warranted in addressing the most zealous and the most obstinate among our opponents in some such terms as these. Our statements are at least sufficiently numerous, our authority eminent, our objects of unspeakable importance to the general interest, if likely to prove attainable; still more so, if in any degree already attained. Examine for yourselves. The field of enquiry is easily accessible. The method of experiment from which we have drawn our conclusions is open to all. But do not in this day of enlightenment run counter to all those principles of inductive research upon which every science, and most especially the science of therapeutics, is based, by falling back upon assumed theories, while we appeal to absolute facts. Investigate strictly, sternly, severely, with every bias towards suspicion and distrust, and, if it must be so, with an utter disregard to the forms of that conventional courtesy which should at all times distinguish the controversies of liberal and enlightened men; but at least do not prejudge. Denounce-but first enquire. Strike if you willbut hear.—At the moment in which we are commemorating at least the partial triumph-at least the greatly improved prospects of a remedial means which we firmly and most sincerely believe to be second in value and efficacy to none adopted from the earliest periods of history by the professors of the healing art-it would ill become us to forget to whose instrumentality the progress of this most beneficial agency in the public estimation is principally owing. It cannot be denied, that for the present aspect of mesmerism both in this country and in the East, we are mainly indebted to the singular talents, to the persevering, the uninterrupted, and the benevolent efforts of one individual, who was foremost among us in asserting its claims to support, and who for many years continued almost single-handed to demonstrate its benefits, with a constancy, displayed amidst multiplied difficulties and

Menneric Infirmary.

discouragements, which may well be compared with most of the best known and the noblest instances of devotion to truth and principle under the most trying forms of personal sacrifice. On the many claims possessed by Dr. Elliotson to the general gratitude, it was not necessary in that gentleman's presence to enlarge. Much moreover of what might be said in relation to his disinterested labours in the cause of humanity would probably be embodied in a resolution, which it was intended to submit to the meeting at a future stage of its proceedings. Thus much however he (Mr. Hollings) might say, that in any mark of esteem and respect which either upon that or upon future occasions may be offered as an acknowledgment of his invaluable services, all who are acquainted with his personal character, or who have in any degree learned justly to appreciate the uniform tenor of his professional career, must consider it equally a pleasure and a privilege to concur. And this, not only from feelings of individual respect, but upon general considerations of the highest moment. Heroism and devotion of one description alone have hitherto almost exclusively engrossed the praises and the honours of mankind. On all sides we saw monuments reared to commemorate the triumphs of physical powers, lasting oblations to that martial daring, that contempt of personal peril or of imminent death, for which nations have as yet principally reserved their titles, their statues, and their distinctions, their acclamations, and their wreaths. At the same time, it has too frequently been forgotten that there is a courage yet more honourable, far rarer, and with much more difficulty sustainable than this. It is that moral heroism, which neither scorn, nor obloquy, nor diminishing estimation, nor waning repute, nor the chilled affection of former friends and associates, nor, yet more formidable than all of these, "the world's dread laugh," can turn back from that which promises to issue in the lessened suffering or the enlarged happiness of mankind; even though the attainment of such an object may appear but as a dim possibility in the far distant future; even though the perfect development of its consequences and the full appreciation of its importance seem only likely to occur when the hands which have laboured the most zealously for its furtherance shall long have been mingled with the dust. But this heroism, too, shall one day have its trophies: and, side by side with the great masters and swayers of the sword, the armed protectors or oppressors of their respective ages, shall be seen the names of those whose labours in more peaceful fields have had for their ends the mental or the moral elevation of their fellows, the alleviation

of human misery, the diffusion among unborn generations of better, less emperilled, or more tolerable conditions of life. In that day, and among the long list of names thus honoured, which the history of our own land will supply, far from the least distinguished, will be that of the eminent physiologist, the accomplished physician, and the generous philanthropist, who was the first to make known, and the most strenuous to establish among his countrymen, the healing tendencies of a state, imitative of nature's best restorative, and no less potent than this for the renewal of impaired vigour, or the alleviation of the racking sense of pain; a state by which, as proved by the grateful experience of multitudes, functional disorders of the worst and most obstinate character have been repeatedly arrested; the progress of those maladies, through which the mind of man sinks slowly but surely amidst the ruins of his shattered intellect, suspended; and those seasons of agonizing endurance, which the judgment of the surgeon is compelled to appoint as the only means of preventing yet severer evils, passed either as an utter pause in consciousness, or, at worst, as but a troubled and a feverish dream.

The Hon. Capt. SCARLETT, in seconding the resolution, said, that after the speech they had just heard it was quite needless for him to detain them by any further remarks. He would, however, call their attention to one point, and that was the great economy practised in that institution, and the great zeal and ability, as well as gratuitous attention, of the medical officers. He had great pleasure in seconding the adoption of the report.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Mr. JANSON (of Exeter) moved that the Archbishop of Dublin and Earl Stanhope be requested to become vicepresidents of the Institution. The hon. speaker briefly alluded to the immense progress that the science of mesmerism had made in Exeter, and said he appeared on the present occasion as representative of that city.*

* Dr. Elliotson made the request in virtue of this resolution, and the following are the answers of the two noblemen :---

" My dear Sir,

"Merton Lodge, Slough, "30th May, 1851.

"I shall be happy to accept the office of Vice-President of the Mesmeric Infirmary.

"The practice is so dangerous in bad or careless hands that it is most important it should be patronized and efficiently superintended by the trustworthy.

"To hold back from it because there are dangers attending it, is to leave it in the worst hands.

"I trust the Institution will, eventually, accomplish much more than the immediate relief of the patients who apply to it.

"There are two other most important results which I think it may be the means of bringing about: (1) the training of some well-qualified persons as pro-

Mr. PARKER (of Exeter), said he had much satisfaction and pleasure in seconding the resolution which Mr. Janson had proposed. Being entirely a stranger to the audience, with two exceptions only, he had to claim their indulgence, as he should feel quite inadequate to the task of addressing them had he not to advocate the cause of truth. He came there to-day not to boast of what he had done in the cause of mesmerism; but he came to render an account of his labours as an act of homage to Dr. Elliotson, their leader and general, "whose deeds of heroism have not been celebrated at the cannon-mouth nor bathed in the tears of the widow." Although he held no public appointment, he had enjoyed the rare privilege of being assisted by Mr. Janson,-that noble specimen of the human race on his left hand. When he told them that he had performed upwards of twenty of the most painful operations on the eye whilst the patients were under his (Mr. Janson's) mesmeric influence, they need only look at him to recognize his very large organ of Benevolence. There is another friend to mesmerism whose presence here to-day he (Mr. Parker) could have wished, and as Mr. Janson fancies there is a kind of free-masonry between mesmerisers, he (Mr. Parker) had the privilege of calling Mr. Luxmoore a brother mason as well as a brother mesmeriser, whose noble deeds he need only mention. He (Mr. Luxmoore) has mesmerised a patient under his (Mr. Parker's) care for five years and a half, from three, six, nine, and even thirteen hours a day, with few intermissions. The sufferings of this patient had been so severe that he had been obliged to bleed her eight hundred times in the course of nineteen years as the only palliative remedy, and she is now quite restored to health by mesmerism. Whatever objections the fastidious may find in public exhibitions of mesmerism, he begged to offer them some compensation in the following results. Having had mesmeric séances at his own house for several years past,

(twice, three times, and often four times a week,) at which

fessional mesmerisers; of which there is a great want: (2) the discovering of some valuable medical clairvoyants.

"Believe me, dear Sir, yours very truly, "R. DUBLIN."

" Dear Dr. Elliotson,

"Chevening, "May 28th, 1851.

"I beg to assure you that I gladly and gratefully accept the distinguished honour which is proposed to me of becoming a Vice-President of the Mesmeric Infirmary, and that no person can feel more interested than myself in the prosperity of that most admirable Institution, or can be more deeply impressed with the conviction of its inestimable importance.

" Very faithfully yours, " STANHOPE."

from 30 to 70 persons had been gratuitously admitted, he and his mesmerisers had produced some of the phenomena of mesmerism on nearly 1,200 persons out of a population of 35,000 inhabitants. In conducting these investigations he had had two objects in view; the first, to examine the variety of phenomena; the second, to provide patients for operations. During the last eight months he had extracted upwards of thirty teeth whilst the patients were in the mesmeric sleep and unconscious of pain. From ten to seventy persons had been present at almost every operation. Multitudes had had their toothache cured, without extraction, and various other pains removed at his séances. Irregularities of the female system had been relieved in hundreds of cases. He would trespass on the audience to mention one case in particular, illustrating the glorious triumph of mesmerism, that of a young gentleman, 16 years of age, whose father is at present and has been for four years in an asylum; his grandmother died deranged. This young gentleman was at school, in May, 1850, at a country town, 10 miles from Exeter, and being, very zealous to win a prize, studied so hard as to become deranged. The medical attendant of the father considered the son's case, after fourteen days' treatment, hopeless. Whilst in this state the patient had torn every nail off his hands from their roots; and being in this miserable and hopeless state, the mother flew as the last resource to mesmerism. Her only child had passed the whole of the fourteenth night in violent delirium. As soon as he (Mr. Parker) and his mesmeriser reached the country town, his mesmeriser soon induced mesmeric sleep, and they had the opportunity of bringing him (the patient) the whole way to Exeter in a quiet state, in an omnibus; and after eleven days' perseverance, they had the gratification of restoring his intellect, and in the course of a few weeks he was quite restored to health and has remained well ever since. In answer to an observation from Mr. Hollings he begged to offer the result of his experience. He had found a relay of mesmerisers succeed in relieving the most desperate and forlorn cases, and the last moments of many of his patients had been soothed by mesmerism: in fact, the last words that some of his patients had uttered, had been to thank Mr. Parker for having administered the comfort of mesmerism in their dying moments. He could not expect the audience to sympathize with him for the base calumny he had received. He dared not trust himself to describe it. The conduct of persons who would wish to be thought to be guided by the genial spirit of Christianity had even surpassed the iniquitous bigotry of the Inquisition, and more resembled the remorseless cannibal. What had been

said there to day he wished to be recorded by his children's children, as the truth of mesmerism must prevail. It might meet with obstacles; it could never be defeated. It put all other doctrines into the shade. It was, in fact, that great electric light that would conduct the human race to the intellectual oasis before them. Mr. Wakley, in his *Lancet*, once compared him to a Phœnix: but he (Mr. Parker) knew that he had not been burnt and revived from his ashes, but had lived twenty years in his house without its having yet been on fire.

The motion was then carried.

It was then moved by Mr. ROBERTSON, and seconded by Mr. BRIGGS, that ladies be added to the committee during the ensuing year. - 1

This was also unanimously agreed to.

Dr. Elliotson was then re-elected Treasurer.

Dr. SYMES next proposed that the following address be presented to Dr. Elliotson :---

"That the sincere congratulations of this meeting are due and are hereby tendered to John Elliotson, M.D., F.R.S., upon the satisfactory advancement of this institution and of a form of medical treatment, the establishment of which, in Great Britain, is due principally to his disinterested, persevering, and most efficient advocacy. Many years have now elapsed since the reality of the phenomena of mesmerism and its applicability to the treatment of some of the most formidable and obstinate diseases, acute and chronic, were demonstrated by experiments conducted by him, and published under the high sanction of his authority as a public professor of medicine and a distinguished teacher of physiology and of therapeutics. How these great truths were received by the medical profession at large, is only too generally known. The pertinacious opposition of an unenquiring scepticism to facts as satisfactorily established and as easily demonstrable as any within the range of experiment and research; and the extent to which base detraction, open invective, and secret obloquy have been systematically substituted for argument and enquiry, are no less matters of general notoriety. The period of prejudice, of incredulity, and intemperate reproach in regard to mesmerism as a curative agent, is at length, however, hastening to its close. Hundreds of cases successfully treated have established incontestably the efficacy of this simple but powerful means for the alleviation and cure of disease. The experiments of enquiring minds here and abroad have succeeded in evolving from mesmeric phenomena truths both physical and physiological, hitherto unsuspected, but which further investigations promise speedily to connect by the bond of

common relations with a new and universal law. In this Institution, and in the Mesmeric Infirmary at Bristol and Exeter, and in the Mesmeric Hospital at Calcutta, to the last of which the direct countenance and support of Government have been extended, the employment of mesmerism has been attended with advantages which the most sanguine of its advocates could hardly have dared to anticipate. In all these Institutions the severest and most inveterate maladies have been arrested and cured, the dumb have been made to speak, the deaf to hear, the blind to see, and the lame to walk; the sick, the insane, the wretched and despairing have been restored to comfort and health; and while not a few operations have been conducted to a successful termination under its soothing influence in this country, in the Calcutta hospital more particularly hundreds have been subjected in a state of perfect unconsciousness and tranquillity to capital operatations of the gravest kind, in not one of which has the employment of this anæsthetic been attended with other than beneficial results; results only less marvellous than the pertinacity with which they have been excluded from all the medical journals which ought to have been the first to welcome and promulgate them. With our congratulations to Dr. Elliotson we will not mingle one word of regret for the labours he has expended, the sacrifices he has made, the persecution he has endured in the warfare against prejudice, indifference and injustice; these are the gains and form the common lot of those who are in advance of the age in which they live; and we feel assured that the magnificent results to which we have referred, effected through the agency of the cause for which he has suffered, and its progress and triumph, must to his large and cultivated mind be more than a compensation for all he has undergone."

Dr. ASHBURNER, in seconding the proposition, said, that it gave him great pleasure to second the motion. The address which had just been read he considered a graceful and wellmerited compliment to the extraordinary man they all agreed to regard as the indomitable champion of the holy truth of mesmerism. They had heard from Mr. Parker that Dr. Elliotson was their leader and their general. He has well fought the battle in which he has been engaged; and, besieged by base enemies, he has thrown missiles into their camps more striking than injurious shells. He has projected the astonishing cure of a case of cancer, which will do more damage to their hostile forces of pride, slander and malice, than a thousand shrapnells. Dr. Elliotson was their general. Let them rather give him a higher function, that of teacher; the highest in which a human being can be engaged; and

they could not pay him a better homage than to bear witness to his zeal and energy in the investigation of a science on which his genius and acumen have been the means of shedding so much light. He (Dr. Ashburner) was quite unprepared to address the meeting, but could not allow the occasion to pass without adding his little tribute of cordial respect for the man whom he was sure they would unanimously address in the terms so well conceived in the paper Dr. Symes had presented to them.

Mr. ALEX. J. ELLIS (of Bristol) in supporting the motion, remarked upon the silence of preceding speakers with respect to one eminent quality in Dr. Elliotson, which was comparatively rare, but was of the utmost importance to investigators, and especially to mesmeric investigators. To these Dr. Elliotson was in this respect not merely a teacher, but a model; he did not merely shew them the path, but he pursued it himself. It happened curiously enough that it was this very quality for which he received the least credit from the world in general; or rather, he was given credit for a precisely opposite quality, and it was therefore due to him that the truth should be publicly spoken. Dr. Elliotson is a remarkably slow believer. So far from being the mere theorist which his detractors assume him to be, he is a patient investigator, who will not allow himself to be led away by appearances, and who never asserts a fact on his own authority till he has thoroughly and carefully established it for himself. He (Mr. Ellis) could speak from long personal acquaintance, and from a knowledge of his writings. It was of the utmost importance that this course should be pursued by mesmerisers generally. A theory may be combatted by arguments: a fact established on the evidence of a careful experimenter is incontrovertible. The science of mesmerism is still in the stage of collecting facts: the theory will follow in time. But we must know the what, before we can pretend to tell the how. It is a blessing which mesmerisers enjoy above all other investigators, that while they are, scientifically speaking, merely discovering facts and processes in nature,-merely instituting experiments for their own private satisfaction, they are practically doing an immense amount of good to their fellow men, and gratifying the most disinterested benevolence at every stage of their enquiry. Mesmerism is the worthy pursuit of the acutest philosopher and the warmest philanthropist. The address was unanimously agreed to, and presented to Dr. Elliotson amidst marks of the greatest approbation. Dr. ELLIOTSON returned thanks; and, a vote of thanks having been given to the chairman, the meeting separated.

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FINIS.

LIST OF OFFICERS.

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The RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF DUCIE.

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TREASURER.

DR. ELLIOTSON.

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